

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

April 27, 2021

The Honorable Debbie Wasserman Schultz  
Chairwoman  
Subcommittee on Military Construction,  
Veterans Affairs and Related Agencies  
House Committee on Appropriations  
HT-2, The Capitol  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable John Carter  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Military Construction,  
Veterans Affairs and Related Agencies  
House Committee on Appropriations  
HVC-227, The Capitol  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairwoman Wasserman Schultz and Ranking Member Carter:

We appreciate the Committee's leadership in addressing the condition of housing for servicemembers and military families. For example, in Fiscal Year (FY) 2021, you provided \$59 million in unrequested funds for unaccompanied enlisted personnel housing through report language.

Many of us have visited military installations and have been stunned by the poor conditions of barracks and other unaccompanied housing. Servicemembers who put their lives on the line for America deserve quality housing, but this is more than just a quality-of-life issue—it is also essential for the safety, security, and wellbeing of servicemembers. Many barracks do not even have air conditioning or have unreliable heating and cooling systems, increasing the risk of mold and its pernicious effects on human health. Furthermore, crumbling housing sends a message about how we value our servicemembers. For example, Fort Hood's widely reported challenges with command climate, sexual assault, and crime also coincide with a failure to invest in living facilities sustainment, as 43% of the barracks at Fort Hood do not meet Army minimum standards, and modernizing these barracks will cost an additional \$496 million through FY27.

To be clear, this is not just a Fort Hood problem—it is endemic throughout the Army and, we fear, the other military Services. The Army has announced a nearly \$10 billion plan to modernize unaccompanied servicemember housing so that all barracks meet or exceed Army standards within a decade.

We respectfully ask the Subcommittee to fully fund the Services' requests for unaccompanied housing modernization so that DoD can make the necessary progress to be on track to complete modernization of all barracks no later than 2030. Underfunding of barracks recapitalization is a problem that has persisted for decades. This chronic quality-of-life issue directly impacts retention.

We recognize the difficult task ahead of your Subcommittee in setting priorities among the many needs of our nation, but we greatly appreciate your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,



Jackie Speier  
Member of Congress



Sara Jacobs  
Member of Congress

Cheri Bustos  
Jason Crow  
Veronica Escobar  
Andy Kim  
A. Donald McEachin  
Abigail D. Spanberger  
Elise Stefanik  
Marilyn Strickland



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Dear Chairwoman Wasserman Schultz and Ranking Member Carter:

We appreciate the Committee's efforts to prioritize child care facilities projects in the annual Military Construction appropriations bill. Most of the \$184 million that was made available for Child Development Center (CDC) facility projects for Fiscal Year (FY) 2021 is directly attributable to your leadership, specifically your decision to include report language providing funding for three CDC projects costing a total of \$152 million. These investments will help ensure safe facilities and expand child care capacity at installations where it is greatly needed.

Since last year, the Department of Defense (DoD) has disclosed stunning information about the scope and impact of the backlog in child care facility projects. The "Report to the Congressional Defense Committees on Department of Defense Child Development Programs," published in June 2020, indicated that, of DoD's 761 CDCs, only 378 are in "Good" condition, with 135 in "Poor" or "Failing" condition due to deferred maintenance and the high cost of needed repairs. Meanwhile, capacity is insufficient, with nearly 9,000 children of servicemembers stuck on a waitlist despite immediate need for child care. Almost half of the waitlist is concentrated in just four locations with the highest demand for and the longest waitlists for child care: Norfolk, San Diego, Hawaii, and the National Capital Region, but intractable waitlists are problems for military families in many other locations as well, including North Carolina, Colorado, Washington State, Texas, and Germany.

Despite this clear need for additional capacity and maintenance of existing facilities, from 2011 through 2020, only four military CDC projects received Military Construction Funding. Your efforts in FY21 were a critical new beginning that essentially doubled the previous 10 years of work. And the task ahead is daunting—the military Services have identified 121 CDC projects that are not yet funded, many of which would add crucial child care capacity at installations with high demand and long waitlists.

Because the need is so great, we respectfully ask the Subcommittee to include the highest possible amount for Military Child Development Center facilities projects under Military Construction. We believe that decades of underinvestment in military child care facilities must be addressed and cannot be resolved through a modest increase. This is not only the right thing to do for America's servicemembers and military families, it is essential to maintain the readiness and capacity of the U.S. military. It will improve the financial security of military families, since 63% of military

spouses are either employed or looking for work, and lack of access to child care is a major barrier to employment. Furthermore, these investments will benefit all families, including non-military families that reside near installations, as the tremendous demand for military child care places further stress on an already insufficient supply of civilian child care providers. These challenges in the civilian sector have been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, with one in six child care jobs lost since February 2020.

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Sincerely,



Jackie Speier  
Member of Congress



Veronica Escobar  
Member of Congress

Julia Brownley  
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Danny K. Davis  
Anna G. Eshoo  
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